

up. No sooner, however, was he on his feet than he reached both hands under his coat-tails, and drew forth from his pockets two parcels, which he held up to our astonished gaze. "That there's dinermite" said he, shaking the longer parcel solemnly at us. "And them there," holding out the smaller, "is percussion caps. One in each hip pocket, gents. An' a asphalt sidewalk. An' me a-settin' on it like a ton o' rock. It's the dear Lord's mercy"—and with that he fell to trembling again. Speaking for myself, I am not afraid to own up to being pretty well rattled, and the Klondiker did not seem much better. But he was a man of resource. "Come right over and take a drink, pard. That'll steady your narves," and he took in a pretty tight reef in his dog-chains. We had that drink and parted, but the slumbers of the present scribe that night were little better than a series of dynamite explosions. What we would like to know is how men so extraordinarily careless as our prospector friend, manage to get around and fool with explosives, and not get blown to atoms.

"BILL THE ADVENTURER."

Victoria, B. C.

THE TIN HORN MINE AT FAIRVIEW.

TO THE EDITOR:—We noticed a report from your Fairview correspondent some time ago stating that there was not sufficient water to run the mill, and scoring the management a little for not putting the mill on the river. We have plenty of water, and the only trouble was that it cost a considerable amount to pipe it. However, it is much better to have it run down than pump it up or convey our ore to the river, which would have to be done if we had built there. We have water enough for a mill double the size. We might ask you to use discretion in putting articles in your paper, as although it does not affect us, still the public are nervous about all mining ventures, and it gives us the trouble of contradicting whatever may be untrue. We are doing our best, and we believe that both the Tin Horn and Winchester will be winners, but much work is necessary, as in any other large concern.

The Tin Horn is being steadily developed and is looking very well. The former Superintendent made some mistakes, which are being rectified as quickly as possible, and we hope to have the mill running and turning out good results in a short time.

DIER, DAVIDSON & RUSSELL.

[We may state that we have every confidence in the integrity of our Fairview correspondent, "Ricardo," and do not believe that he would bring a charge—as complained of by Messrs. Dier, Davidson & Russell—without proper cause for doing so. It is possible, however, that in this case his judgment was at fault, but at any rate he will doubtless take an early opportunity of explaining upon what grounds his criticisms were based.—Ed.]

CONDITIONS OF MINE-WORKERS AT ROSSLAND. EVILS OF THE TRUCK SYSTEM.

TO THE EDITOR:—In answer to an article in the March issue of your valuable paper, I wish to make a few statements:

1st. Your contributor takes it for granted that in delivering a favourable report of most mines in this camp, the Inspector did not do his duty. There are many in this camp who hoped to see the underground workings of the Le Roi mine condemned. Unfortunately there is a class of men in this camp who think that when they obtain work in a gold mine, and especially one which pays a dividend, they are only expected to draw their salary. Such men do not "get on" amicably with the management of this mine, and especially with its Superintendent, who expects a fair shift's work for the standard wage of the camp. They are told that it is impossible to carry them on the pay-roll for ornament's sake, so they, to even things up, circulate all kinds of rumours, both about the mine and its management. Having worked in the Le Roi mine for more than eighteen months, and up till last month, I can say that it is the best mine for the workman, in the camp, always excepting mines which have no boarding houses. The firing regulations in the Le Roi mine are arranged by the men, and if anyone can suggest an improvement it is at once accepted. There is no limit to the fuse allowance, and on the 600-foot level fifteen feet of fuse to each hole is used. In testing that length I found it to burn for six minutes, thirty seconds. I should not be afraid to wager that I could light a fuse of that length at the 600-foot station, and climb to surface before it had finished burning.

I believe the Stonehouse incident to be entirely the fault of the clerk at the surface, and also of his partner, who circulated

the rumour about Stonehouse having been killed. Stonehouse was my friend, and I was the first to search for him.

The boarding-house system is next in order. If the boarding-houses where men are forced to board, were capitalized for a reasonable sum and the stock placed on the market, it would command in most cases a higher price than that of the mine to which the hotel is an appendage.

There are, at a conservative estimate, one thousand men working in this camp. Fifty per cent. is a very low estimate of those who board at the Company houses. Then five hundred men, paying \$30 per month for board and lodging, pay into these Company houses the small sum of \$15,000 per month. That same amount of money, if divided amongst the people of this town, would mean the employment of at least two hundred people who are now idle.

The very best of board is obtained at less than the prices charged at the mine hotels. I can say that I have seen better board in a railroad mess-house, at \$4 00 per week, than in the Le Roi Hotel at \$7 00.

Young men having mothers and sisters depending on them, and not feeling themselves able to support a wife, are forced to pay \$30 per month to the Hotel. The writer paid room-rent at the Le Roi Hotel for eighteen months, and never used a room. Nor is this the worst feature. Not very long ago the employees of the Le Roi mine went in a body to the Superintendent, and requested better "grub." He listened to them kindly, and referred them to the manager of the Hotel. The manager, gentle and considerate always, promised to do better, and immediately informed the mine management that if better board were furnished the men, the hotel dividends must decrease. Now any material decrease in the hotel profits would naturally affect the amount of monthly dividend declared by the Company. This must not be; profit must not be allowed to decrease one iota. Result—fourteen married men were weeded out, to be replaced by those who would board at the hotel, next morning, and the good work is going on.

The patient forbearance of the miners of this camp, shows that they are indeed as forbearing a body of men as can be found anywhere in the province.

"All experience hath shown that mankind are more disposed to suffer evil while evils are sufferable, than to use force to overcome them." The boarding-house system in this camp is getting insufferable.

The Miner's Union of this camp have been placidly watching developments. Their influence to bring about a desirable change must be reckoned as "nil." Men will not continue to pay money to what they consider more of a sick benefit society, afraid to live up to the standard of its own constitution, when they pay a hospital fee at their mine.

The married men of this camp declared and have maintained that the boarding-house system was not a grievance of theirs. There are at least fourteen married men who have since changed their opinions. Yes, the "truck system" is upon us, and we humbly bow our necks to receive the yoke, yet the writer is one of a few who hope that we who are patiently bearing such injustice, will yet find a champion amongst the law-makers.

It may be that the hour of deliverance has not yet arrived for us. God grant that it may come before the limits of forbearance are passed.

ROSSLAND, B.C. ANOTHER DISGUSTED LOOKER-ON.

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE MINERAL ACT.

TO THE EDITOR:—Supposing A stakes a claim, but fails to do the work prescribed by the Act, and B re-stakes the said claim at the expiration of the time granted to A by the Act; why could not the Act be altered so that B could give "notice" of record of the claim in question. But the Government—while recording the "notice" and acknowledging this by a special document—decline to grant a "record" unless, within a specified time during the next year, the work called for by the Act be done by B. This time allowance should only be sufficient to do the work, and should be at the discretion of the Gold Commissioner, owing to the difference in climatic conditions. The Gold Commissioner or other justified Government employee would of course be responsible for the just and fair application of the power thus vested in him.

Vancouver, B.C.

A FREE MINER.

[This is one of the best suggestions yet put forward as a result of the discussion provoked by Mr. Carlyle. If our correspondent's suggestion were carried out it would neutralize the evil effects of the "abandoning" clause to the mineral act of last session.]—Ed.